Advancing Equity in Transportation

The Role of Title VI and Environmental Justice in Transportation Planning

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How familiar are you with equity as it relates to transportation?

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Laws, Policy, and Guidance

Civil Rights Act of 1964	• Title VI – Environmental Justice
The American with Disabilities Act	• Persons with disabilities
Executive Orders 12898, 13166, & 13985	• Minority, low income, LEP

Residents in Dayton, Ohio march along highway to protest lack of bus service to area malls (June, 2013).

Source: www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2015/02/america_s_transportation_system_discriminates_against_minorities_and_poor.html

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

- Federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in all programs and activities receiving federal funding

https://www.history.com/news/civil-rights-act-1964-steps

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

- Federal law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodation, communications, and access to government programs and services

https://www.access-board.gov/ada/vehicles/

Executive Order 12898

- Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations
- Focuses on environmental and health effects of federal actions on minority and low-income populations

Source: https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2017/01/f34/201701_EJStrategy.pdf

Environmental Justice

- No population should bear a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequences

https://www.eopugetsound.org/articles/environmental-justice

Executive Order 13166

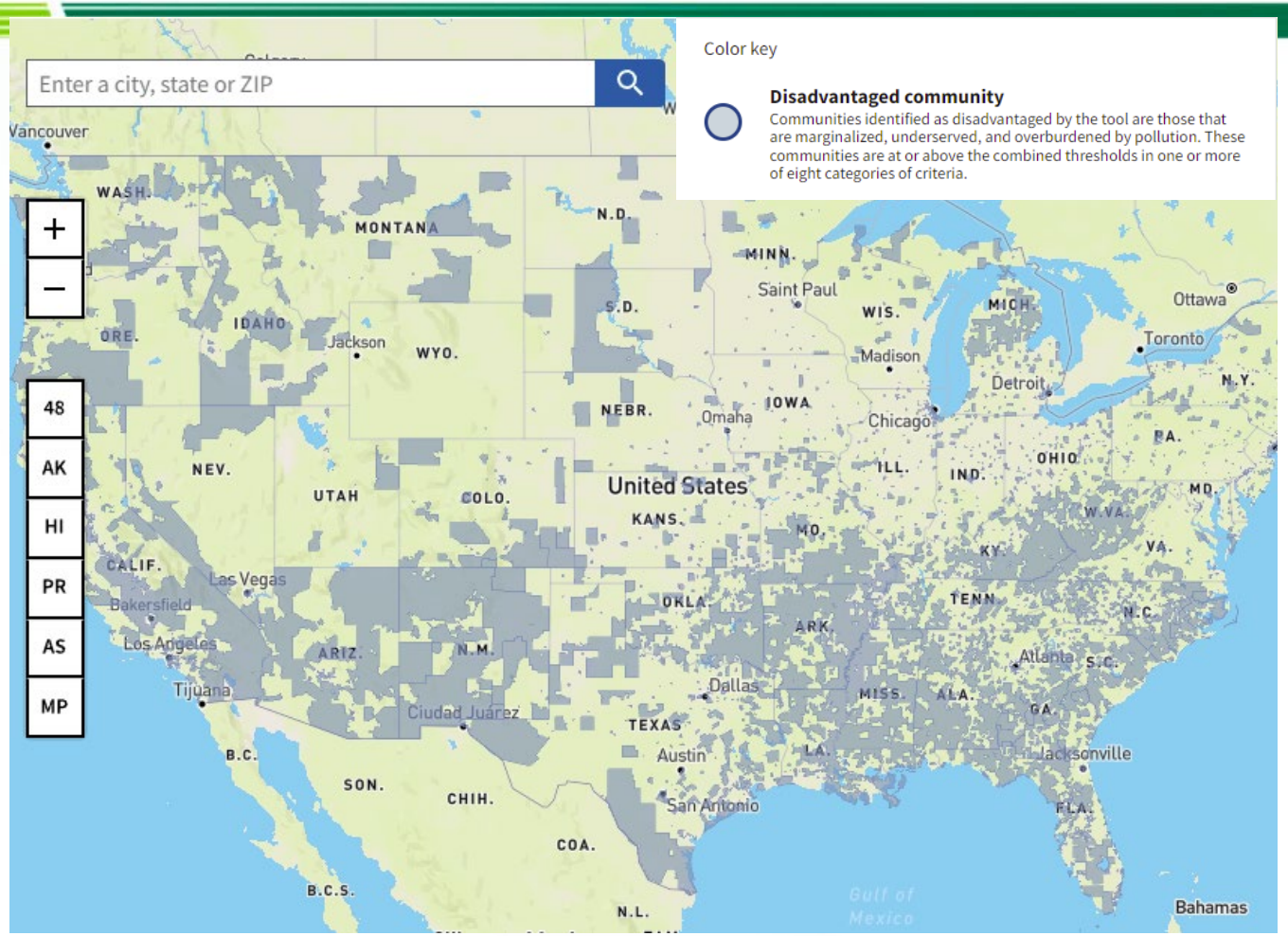
- Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
- Requires federal agencies to examine their services, and to develop and implement a system to increase accessibility for LEP individuals

Executive Order 13985

- Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government
  - Requires federal agencies to examine if their policies and practices contribute to inequities in service access, utilization, and outcomes
  - Establishes requirements on the Office of Management Budget (OMB) Director and executive departments to take proactive steps to eliminate barriers to equal opportunity for underserved communities

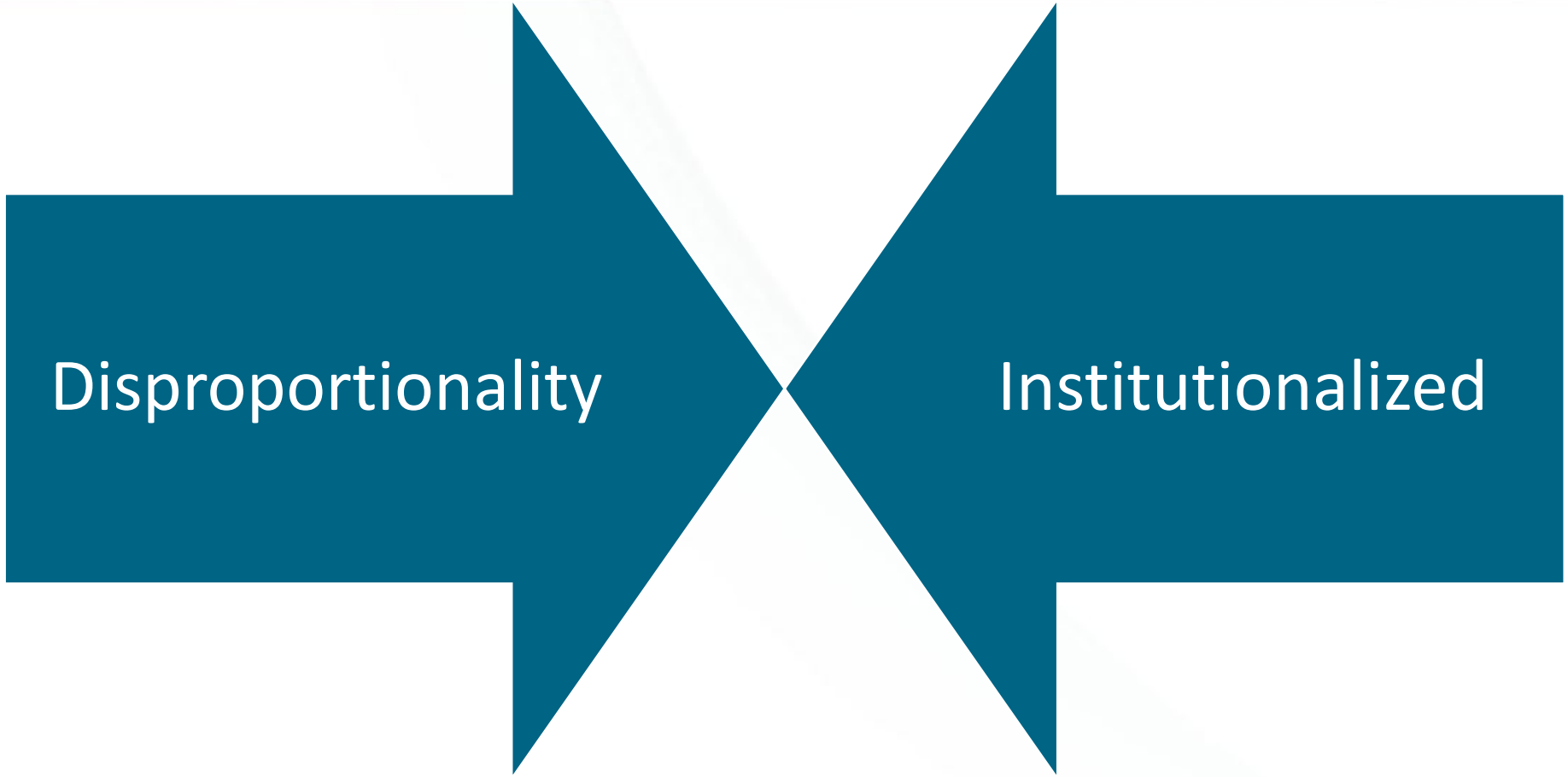
Justice 40

- Aims to deliver 40 percent of the overall benefits of relevant federal investments to disadvantaged communities
- Addresses inequities that hinder sustainable, just society, and that disproportionately harm low-income and communities of color



Source: https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/cejst#3.55/34.22/-99.12

Inequality



Equality, Equity, & Justice: Key Terms

Proportionality

Horizontal

Restorative

Vertical

Equity & Justice

Equality, Equity, & Justice: Defined

Equality

The assumption is that **everyone benefits from the same supports**. This is equal treatment.

Equity

Everyone gets the supports they need (this is the concept of "affirmative action"), thus producing equity.

Justice

All 3 can see the game without supports or accommodations because **the cause(s) of the inequity was addressed**. The systemic barrier has been removed.

https://www.mobilizegreen.org/blog/2018/9/30/environmental-equity-vs-environmental-justice-whats-the-difference

In your opinion, how important is equity in transportation?

DEI in a Transportation Context

Diversity	Equity	Inclusion
Does the transportation network provide adequate access to opportunity for all populations?	Do all persons regardless of race, income, gender, ability have equitable access to safe, affordable, and reliable transportation?	What groups have been traditionally underserved by transportation processes? How can they be more effectively involved in the transportation decision-making process to create a system that benefits them?

Why Does Equity Matter in Transportation?

Improved access to opportunity for all persons

Ensure equal access to safe, affordable and reliable transportation

Achieve more equitable distribution of transportation benefits and burdens

- What is fair and who decides?
- Which benefits? Which burdens?
- How should they be distributed?
- Who is affected?
- Can we mitigate negative consequences?

Distributional Equity

Underserved communities vs. The region

Geographic distribution of projects by type

Distribution of benefits and burdens

Assessing Benefits and Burdens in Transportation

- Ensure that plans, project elements, and policies advance the needs of underserved populations
- Identify if actions introduce any barriers, disrupt access, cause displacement, or create health and safety hazards

Who is helped?

Who is harmed?

Who is missing?

- Ezell, 2022

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Does transportation benefit various population groups differently?

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Equity-Based Analysis

Locate underserved communities

Inventory and assess mobility needs

Conduct targeted field studies and involve the community

Evaluate and prioritize needs

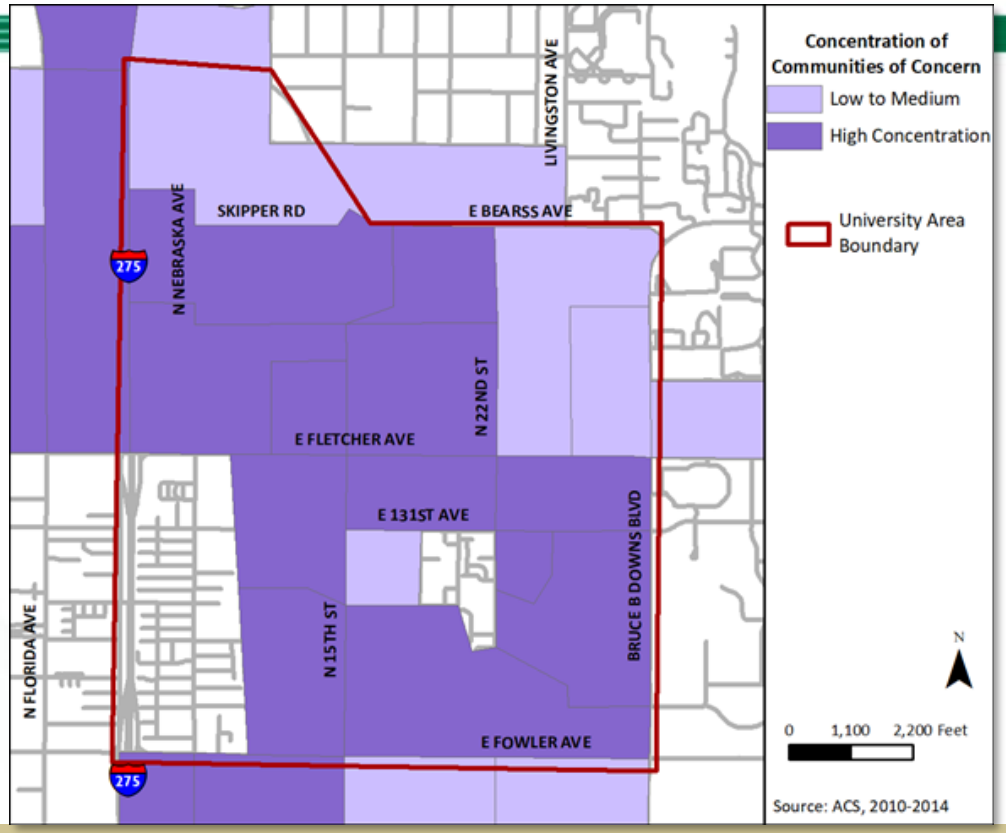
Source: usa.streetsblog.org

Source: live.staticflickr.com

Source: Jerilee Bennett/The Gazette

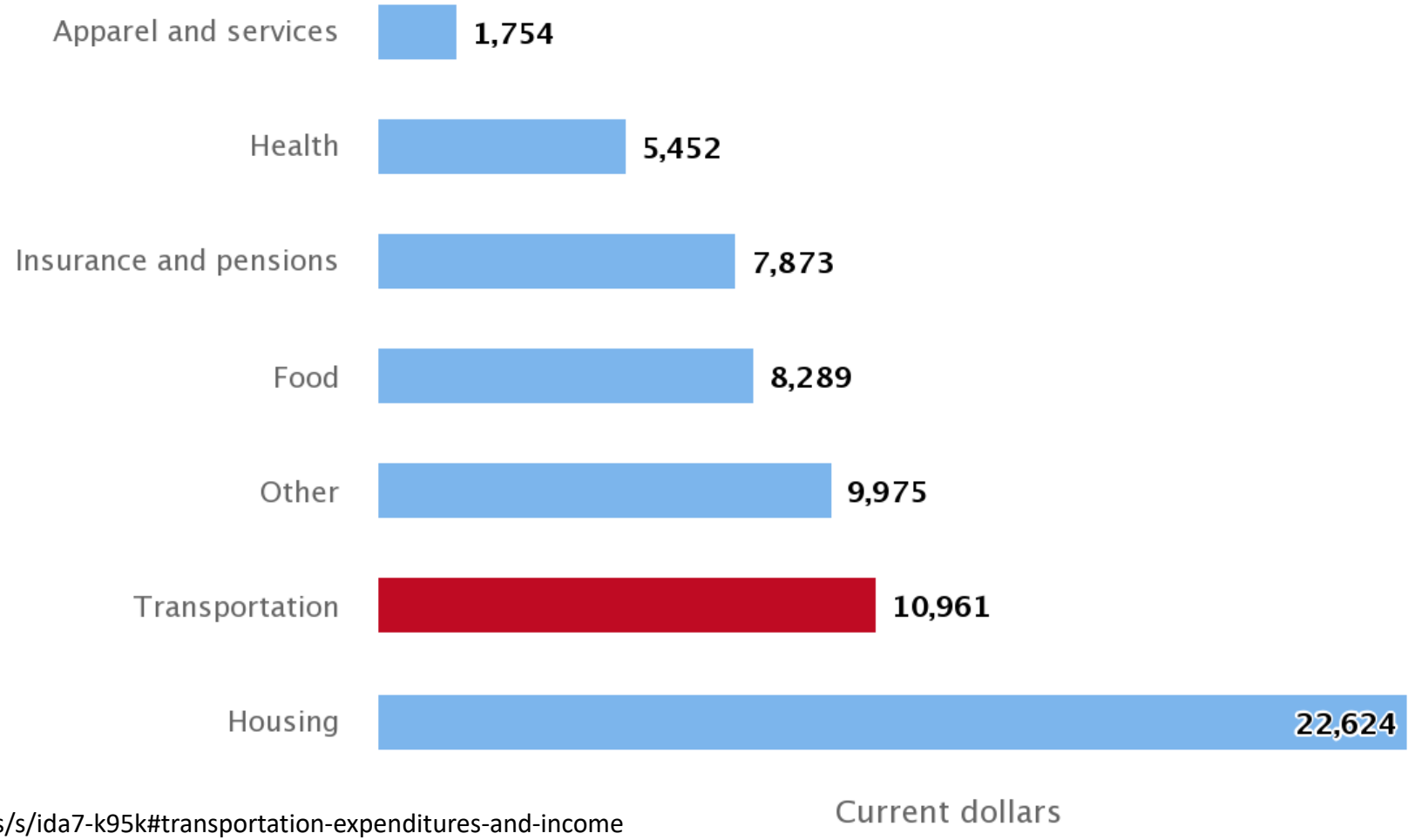
Locate Traditionally Underserved Communities

- Communities whose needs have traditionally been underserved in the transportation planning process
- Populations may include low-income and
  - Minority
  - Older adults
  - Young persons
  - Women
  - Persons with disabilities
  - Single-parent households
  - Zero-vehicle
  - Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
  - LGBTQ+
  - Other underserved or disadvantaged populations groups



Individuals may belong to more than one underserved community and face intersecting barriers.

2021 Household Expenditures

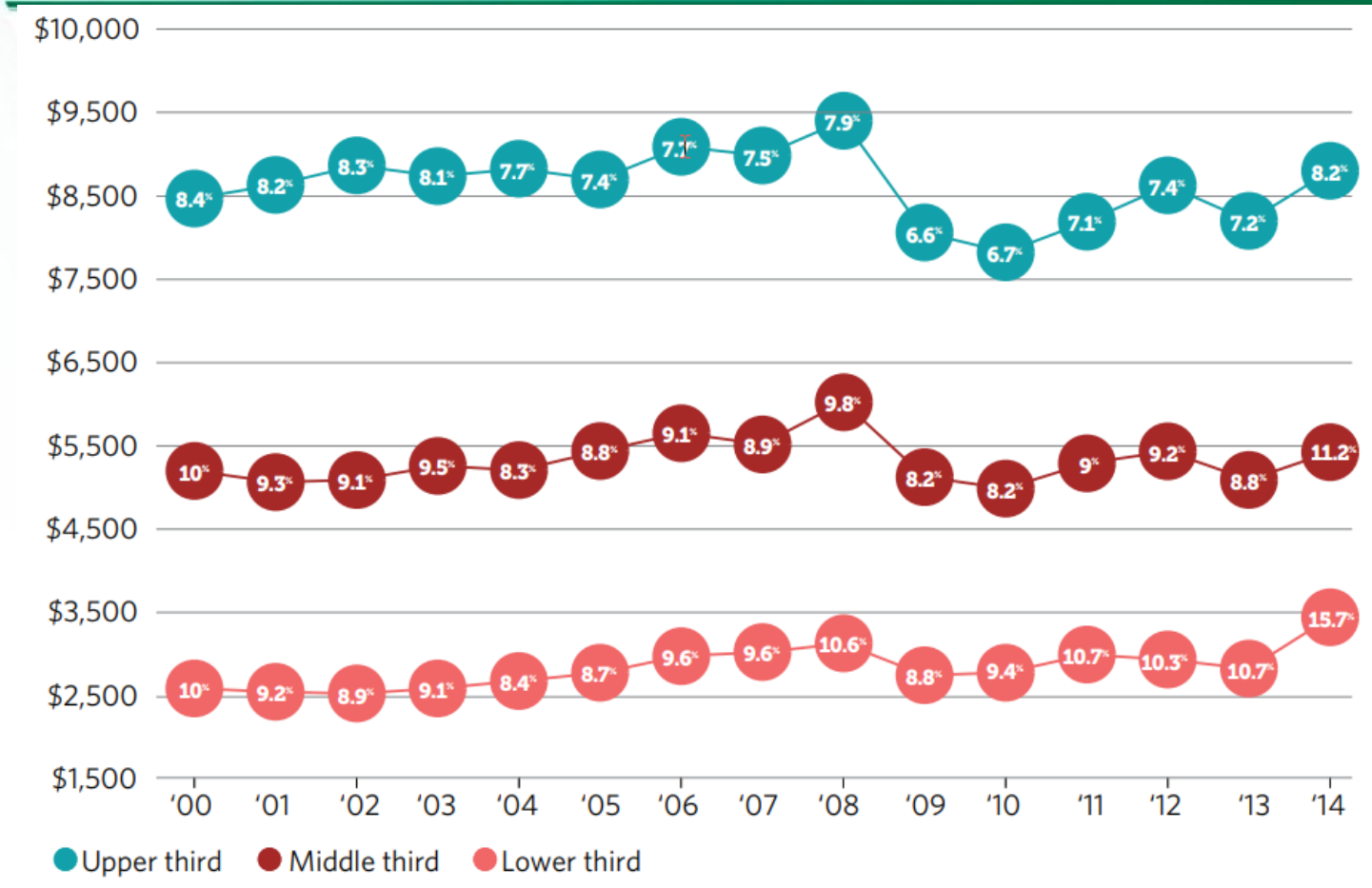


https://data.bts.gov/stories/s/ida7-k95k#transportation-expenditures-and-income

Share of Income Spent on Transportation

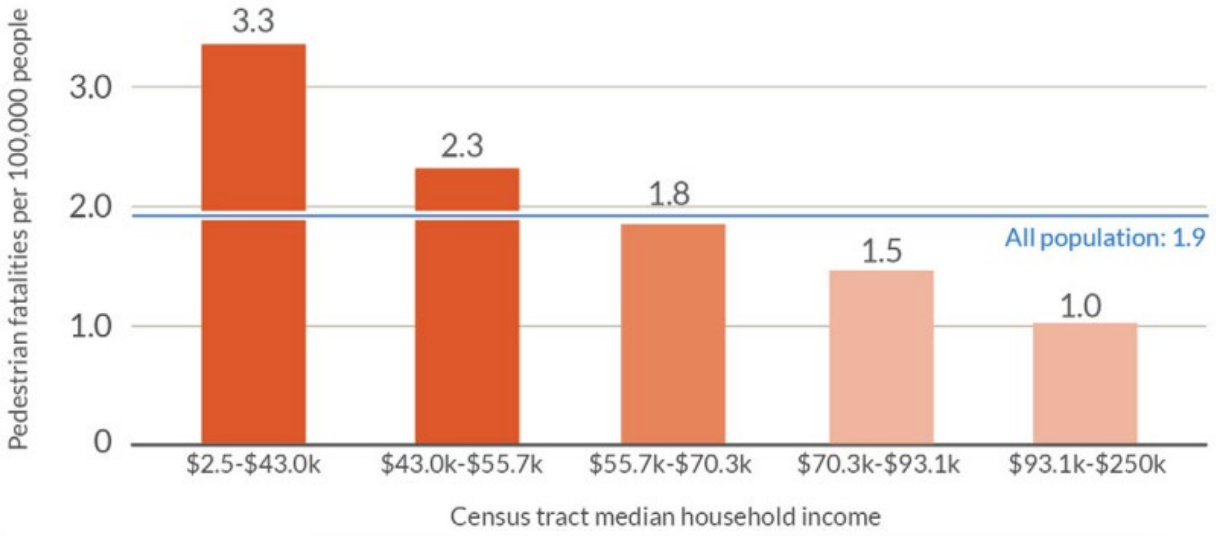
Households in the **lowest income quintile** spent the **least on transportation** … but faced **a larger transportation cost burden**, spending 26.9 percent of their after-tax income on transportation compared to 10.4 percent by the highest income quintile in 2021.

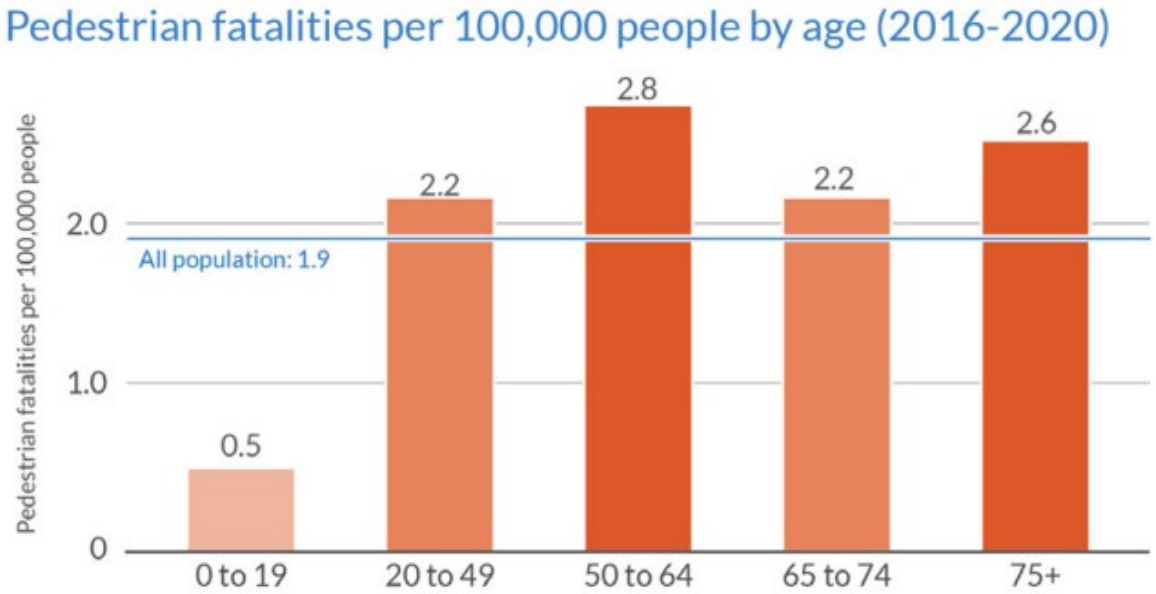
-Bureau of Transportation Statistics
https://www.bts.gov/product/transportation-economic-trends

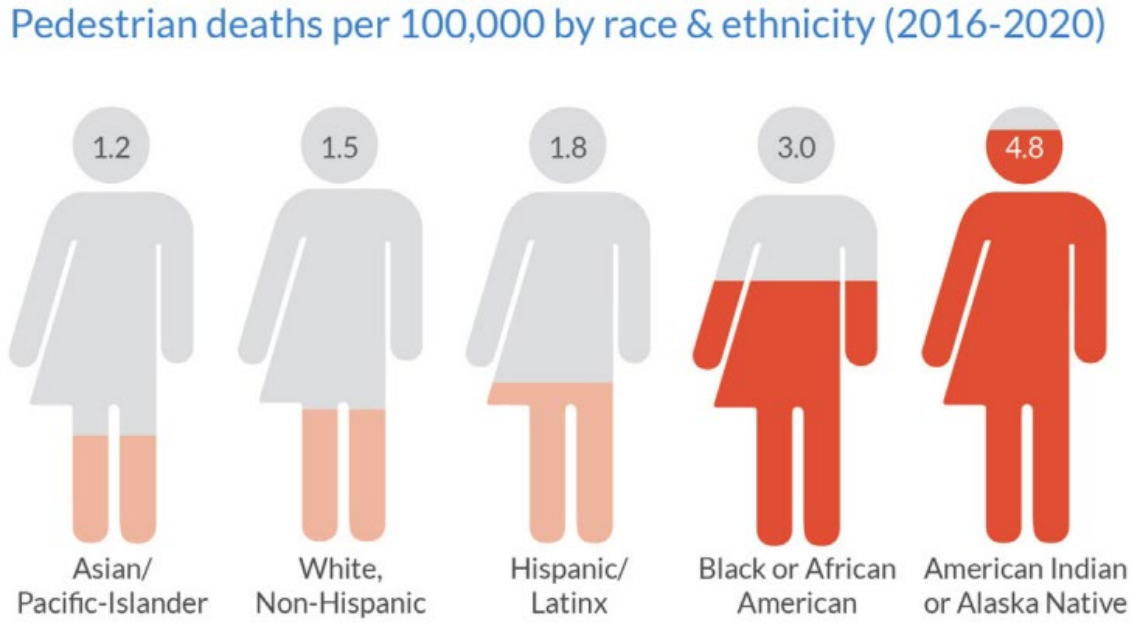


https://www.pewtrusts.org/~/media/assets/2016/03/household_expenditures_and_income.pdf

Most Vulnerable Populations

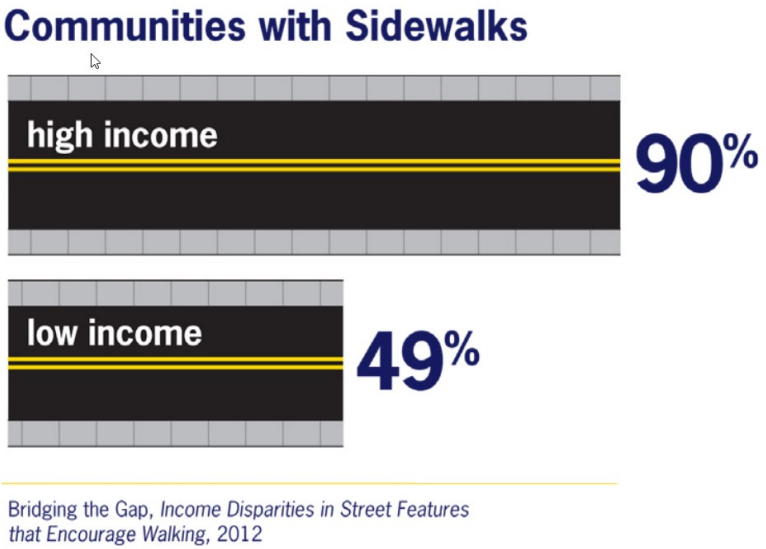




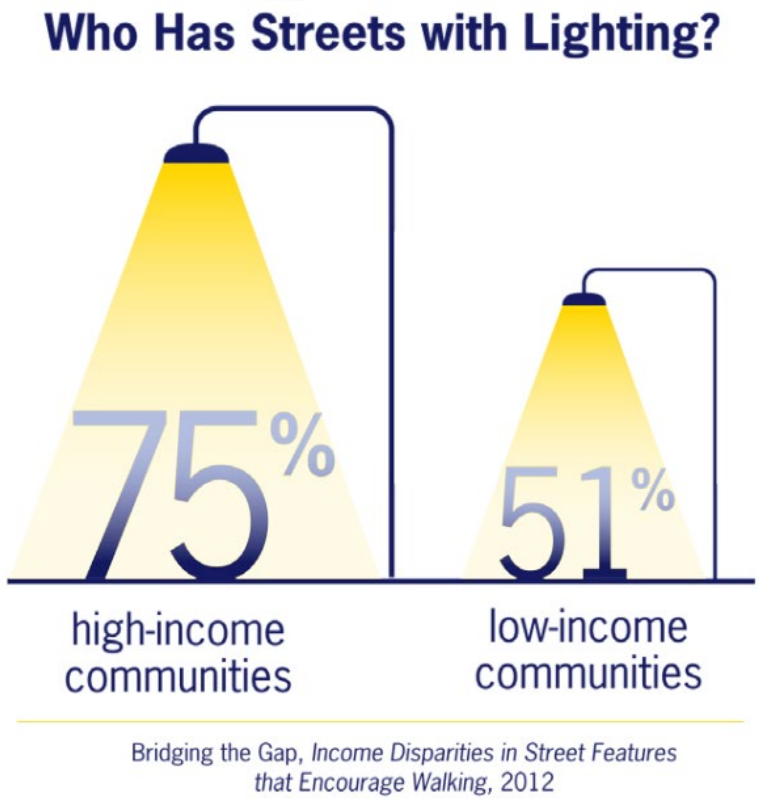


Dangerous by Design, 2022: https://smartgrowthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Dangerous-By-Design-2022-v3.pdf

Street Features by Community Income Level



Bridging the Gap, *Income Disparities in Street Features that Encourage Walking*, 2012



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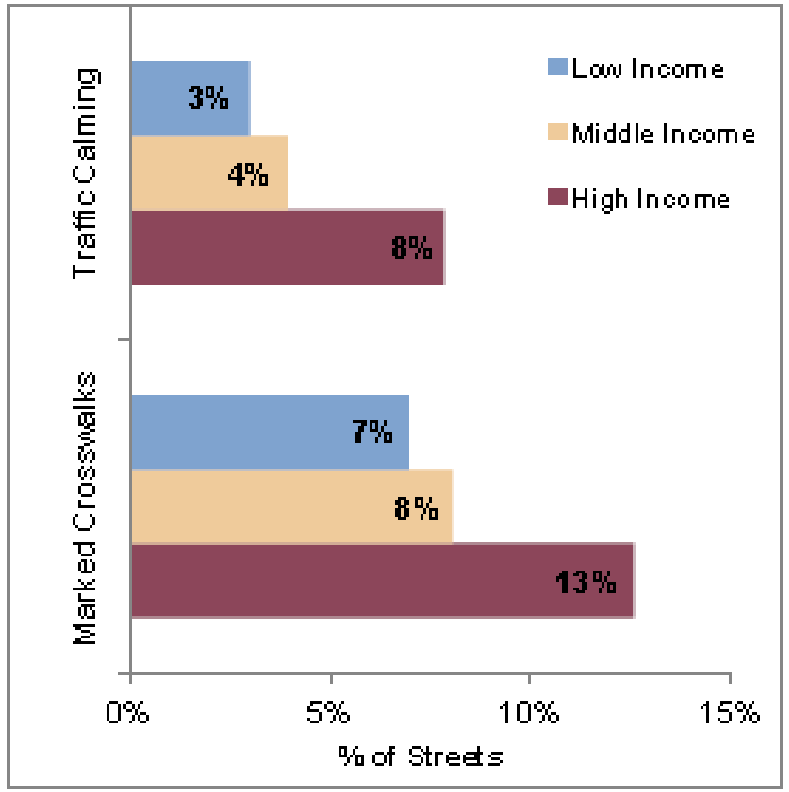
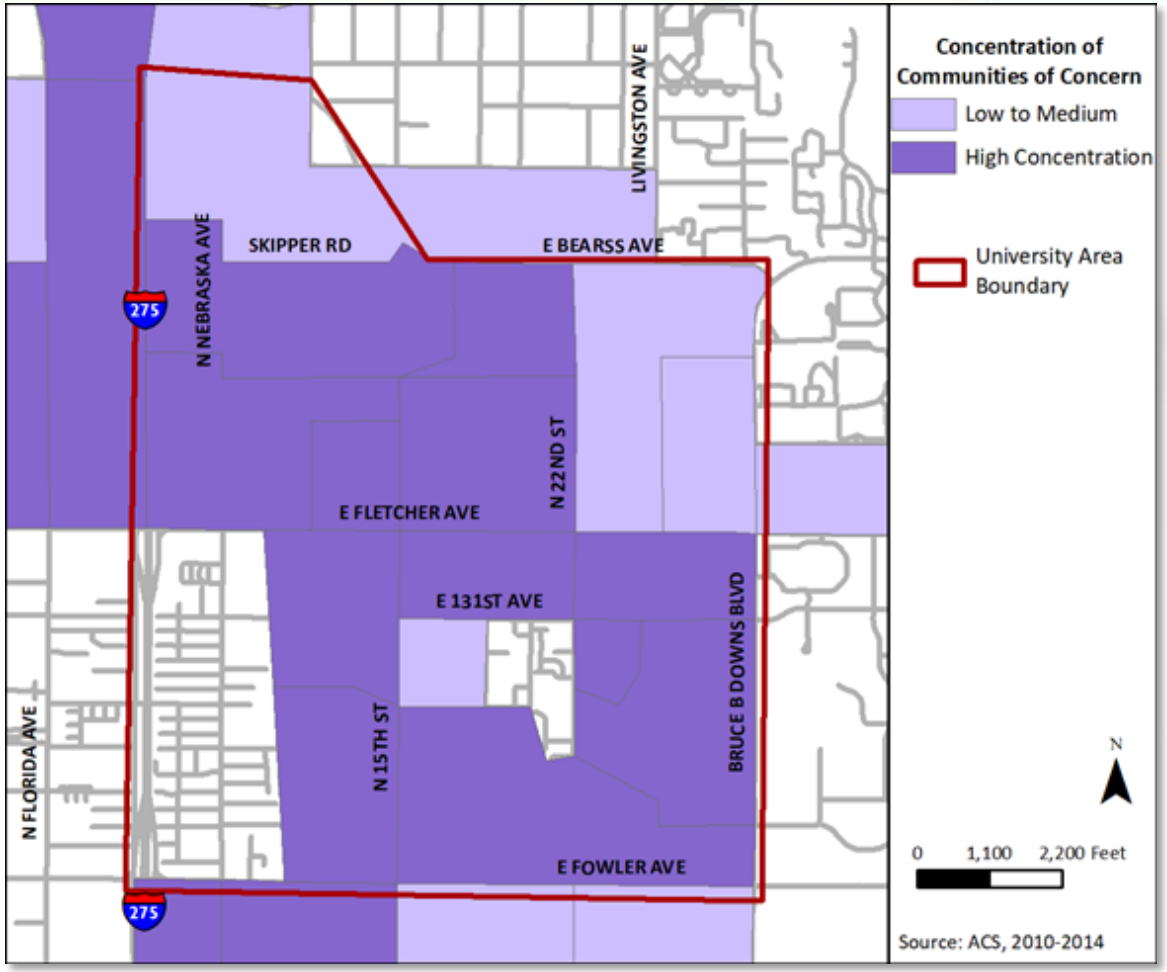
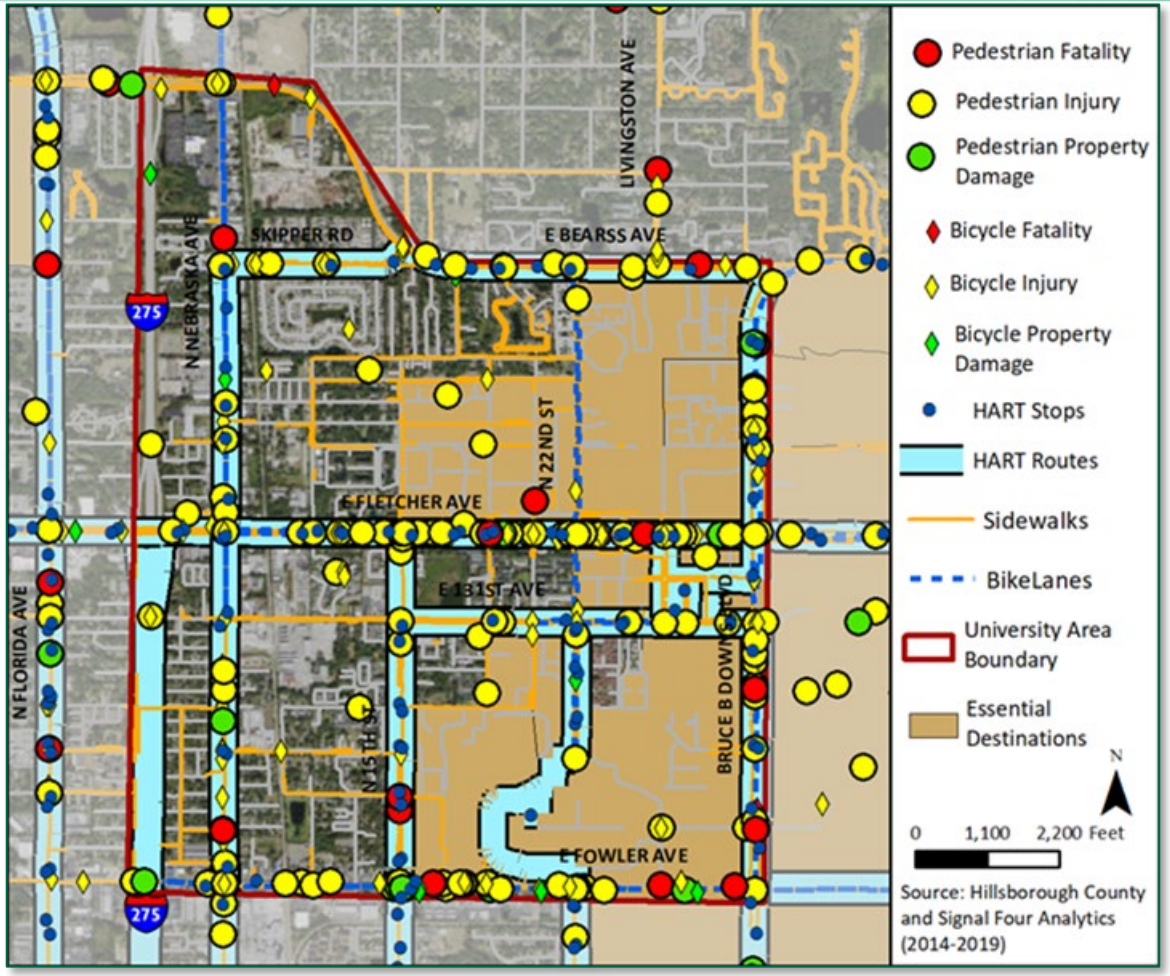


Bridging the Gap, Income Disparities in Street Features that Encourage Walking, 2012

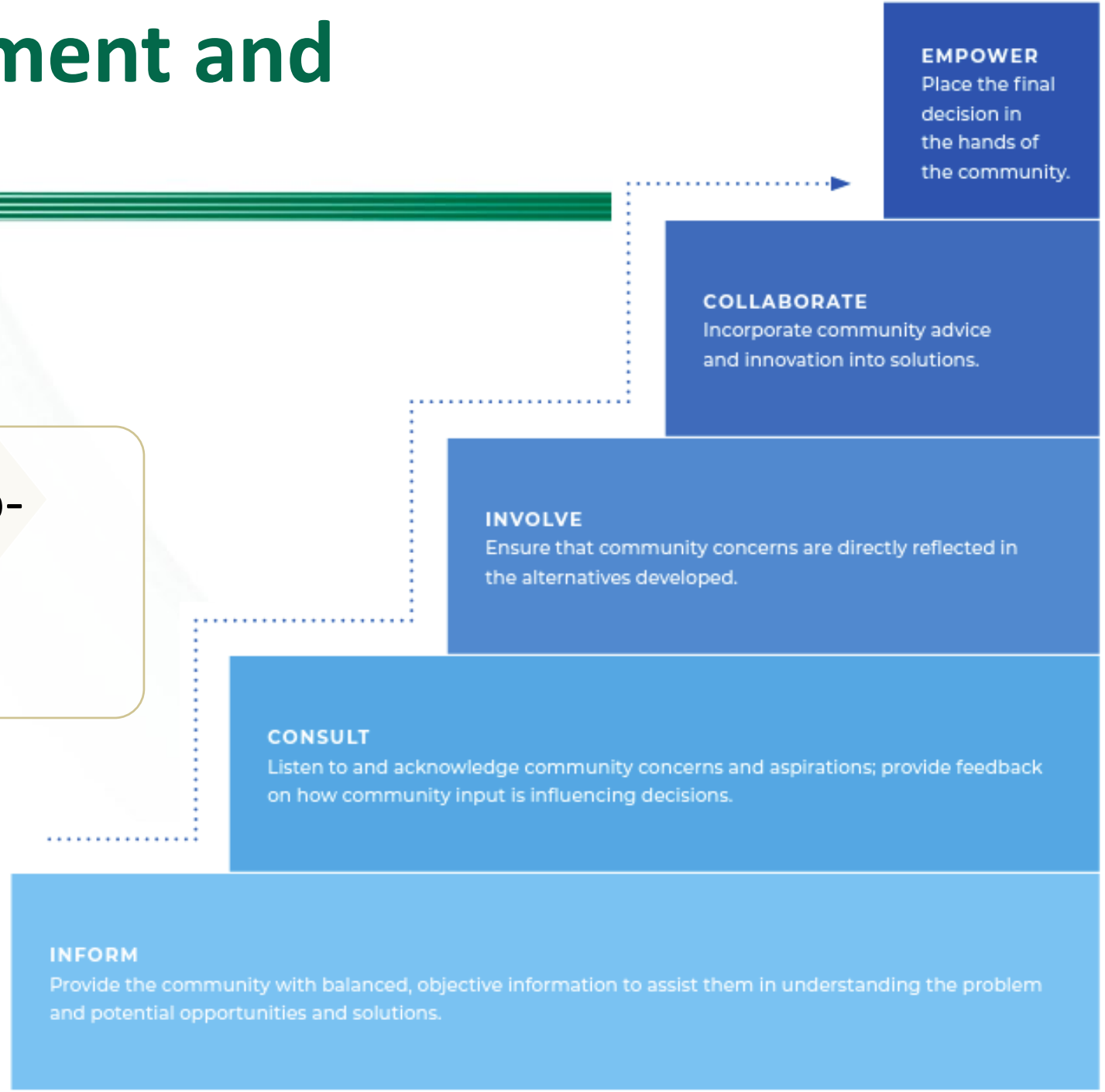
Inventory & Assess Mobility Needs





Community Engagement and Empowerment

Collaborate and co-create WITH the community



Source: https://sustainablect.org/fileadmin/Random_PDF_Files/Files_and_Resources/SustainableCT_EquityToolkit_January2019.pdf

Methods to Evaluate Community Needs

Prioritize needs

- Identify indicators to measure and prioritize transportation needs
- Conduct a SWOT analysis

Identify and analyze causes

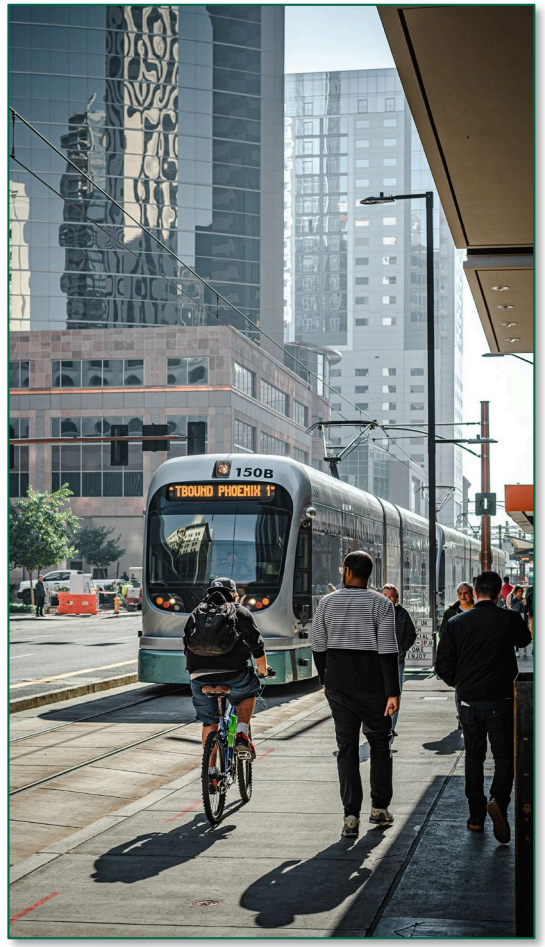
- Root cause analysis
- Cause and consequence analysis

During community meetings ask community members to identify their top transportation challenges/needs.

Adapted from Comprehensive Needs Assessment, Office of Migrant Education, 2001

Equity Indicators

- Affordability
- Safety
- Access/Connectivity (bicycle, pedestrian, transit) to essential destinations
- Travel Time and Distance
- Congested vehicle miles travelled by population segment
- Mode share
- Project investment by population segment
- Environmental Quality/Exposure to emissions and pollution



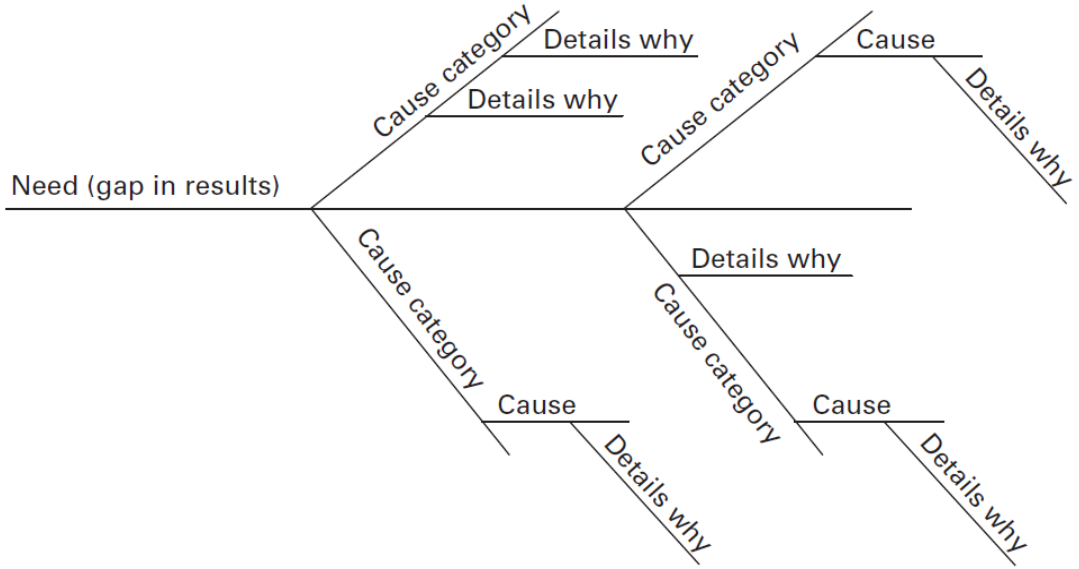
What is the greatest transportation challenge in your community?

SWOT Analysis

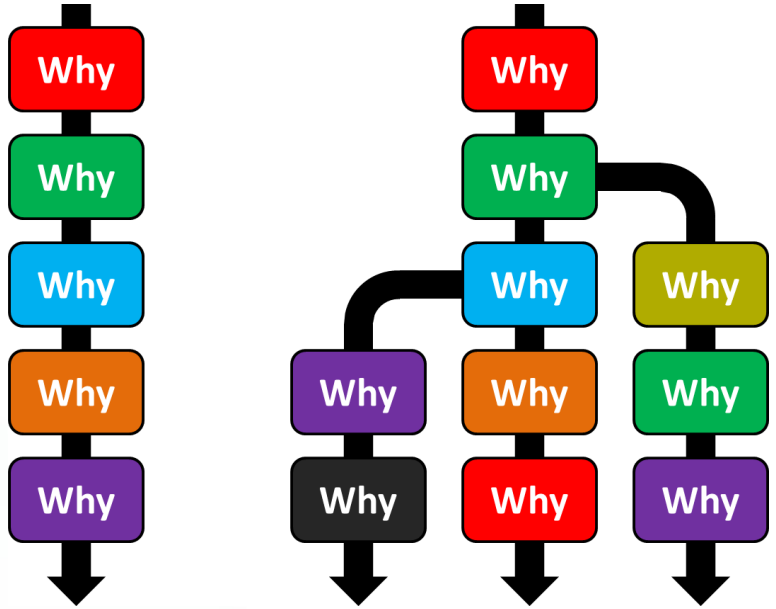
	Benefits	Burdens
Existing	<u>Strengths</u> Existing assets that are beneficial to the community	<u>Weaknesses</u> Assets that need improvement or the community lacks
Future	<u>Opportunities</u> Trends that can positively impact the community	<u>Threats</u> Trends that can create or worsen barriers in the community

Root Cause Analysis

- The “Five Whys”
  - Why does this need exist/continue?
  - How do we know?
- Fishbone diagram



Adapted from A Guide to Assessing Needs, Watkins et al., 2012

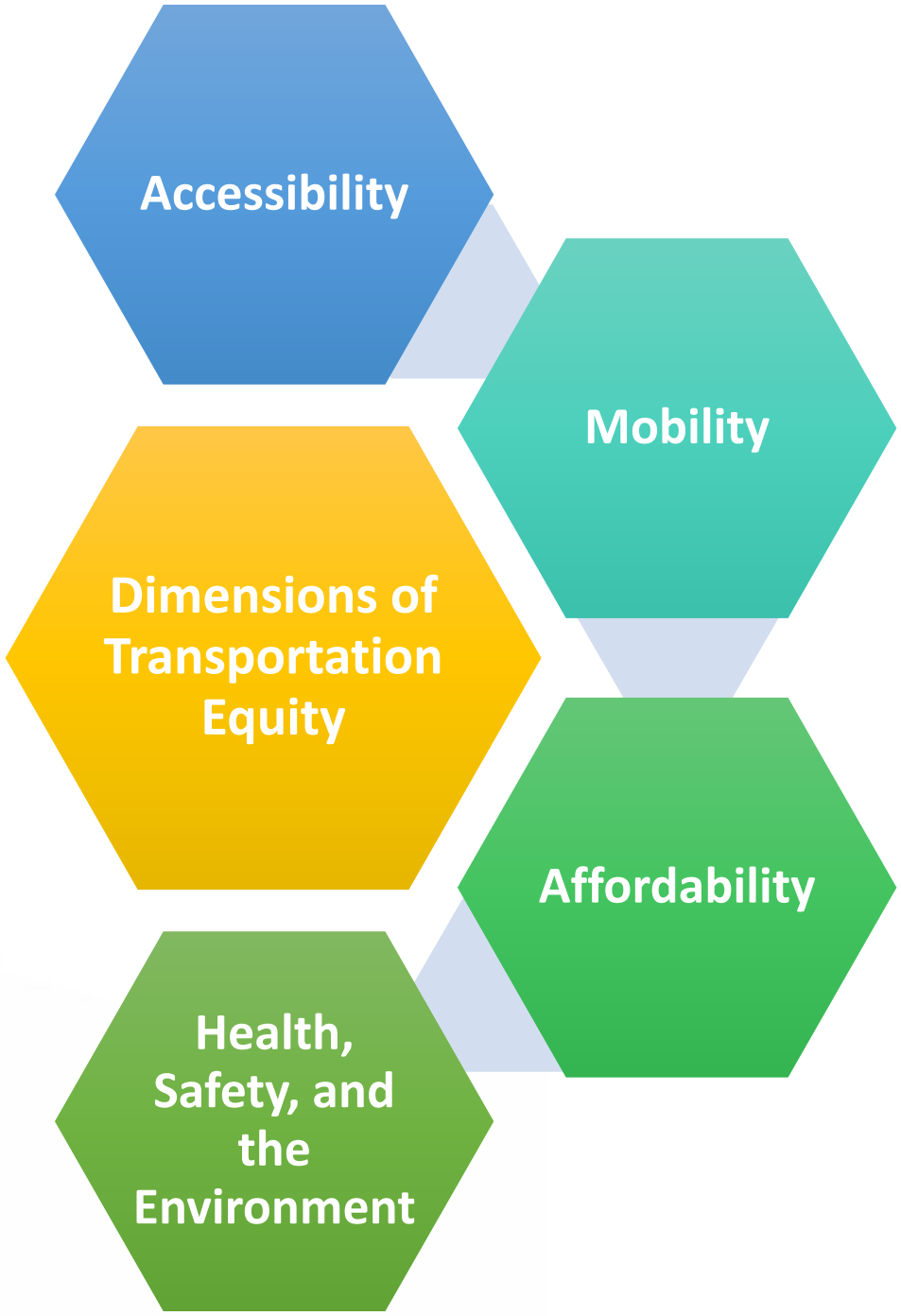


Cause and Consequence Analysis

Need	Causes	Consequences	Difficulty to Correct [low, medium, high]	Criticality 1 2 3 4 5
Students do not feel safe walking/biking to school	High-speed roadways Long distances between safe crossings	Risk of severe injury or death while crossing midblock	Low	5

“How do we meet the needs of all communities?”

-R. Marcantonio



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What are some strategies to advance equity in transportation?

How Can We Advance Equity in Transportation?

- Include equity as a vision and goal
- Use an equity lens when evaluating impacts
- Systematically prioritize projects for underserved communities
- Engage underserved communities throughout the planning and project selection process
- Dedicate funding to equity in project prioritization
- Be transparent during prioritization and planning
- Score and weight equity similar to other criteria
- Consider equity from multiple perspectives

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